Foundations For World Class Safety Performance

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ABSTRACT

As globalization of industry has spread, it has driven initiatives to establish worldwide standards for benchmarking companies against each other and identifying “world class” levels of performance. So to successfully compete in today’s global marketplace, companies must achieve world-class performance in all business areas including safety.

The measurement criteria that will accurately reflect an organization’s safety performance are identified. The results of safety performance that most organizations presently focus on are reviewed. Then, criteria being used by both an internationally recognized consultant and the U.S. regulatory agency, OSHA, are presented as more accurate gauges of an organization’s ongoing safety performance processes.

The benefits of focusing on the measurement of these inputs to the safety process rather than on the safety performance outcomes and the relationship between these two categories of safety performance criteria are depicted using a pictorial model. An expanded model is then utilized to introduce the human factors of today’s behavior-based safety processes that experts suggest are necessary to reach world-class conformance levels with traditional safety program elements.

A bridge is used as an analogy to illustrate how achievement of World Class Safety Performance must be built on the two foundations of “safety management systems” and human factors, better known today as the organization’s “Safety Culture”. The common attributes that distinguish companies with world-class safety cultures are reviewed.

In summary, the need to use safety process measures rather than outcomes to accurately determine safety performance levels is reiterated. Then a real life situation involving 2 major corporations is recounted to show how a world-class safety culture makes the difference in achieving World Class Safety Performance.